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DEQ receives top scores in Federal Radiation Protection Program inspection

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality has received the highest possible rating from a federal agency in a review of DEQ's radiation protection program. The comprehensive review is performed every four years by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and is designed to assure that DEQ's radiation program does, in fact, protect the public health and safety of Louisiana's citizens.

The NRC awarded the highest possible rating to each of DEQ's five performance indicators:

- (1) the status of DEQ's radioactive material inspection program;
- (2) the technical quality of DEQ's radioactive material inspections;
- (3) DEQ's technical staffing and training; (4) the technical quality of DEQ's radioactive material licensing actions; and (5) DEQ's response to radiation incidents and allegations.



Scott Blackwell, Environmental Scientist, surveys for radiation on an industrial radiography camera that is used to X-ray industrial pipe.

DEQ's radiation protection program licenses all users of radioactive material in the State of Louisiana and registers X-ray machines. The program also conducts ongoing inspections of all facilities that are licensed or registered. The review team consisted of four technical staff members from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and one from the State of Tennessee. The review is conducted in two parts: DEQ regional inspectors during the review of all other operations March 3, 2000. The review collection activities from October Louisiana has been an since 1967; that is, the NRC has tory authority over most radioac-and industry.

In return, the state must main-gram that both assures public health the federal program. The NRC that all program objectives were met and that DEQ's radiation protection program was both "adequate" to protect the public health and safety of Louisiana citizens and "compatible." By rating DEQ as "compatible," the commission believes that DEQ is trained on a level that is consistent with the NRC and other states. DEQ conducts business in a similar manner so that there is consistency throughout the nation.

According to Chris Roberie, DEQ's administrator in charge of the radiation protection program, "The fact that DEQ has received the highest possible score in this comprehensive outside review is a credit to the staff working in radiation protection and inspection."

